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when 'keen' farmers prepare the yam plots for the next year, and re-hoe the yam mounds into ridges to be ready for next year's planting.

The harvest of late millet, which falls in November, is the signal that the last 'rush-period' of the year has begun. Let me first describe the harvesting of millet—the method is the same for both millet varieties and for sorghum. The millet and sorghum varieties cultivated in Nupe grow to a height of 6–8 feet. To reap the corn, the stalks are broken and cut close to the ground, and then laid in bundles in the furrows, where they are left for from five to seven days to dry in the sun (an exception is bulrush-millet, which may have to be dried artificially). Afterwards the heads of the plants are cut off with the bush-knife and carried home in large bundles, 50–60 lb. in weight, while the stalks are left on the fields. These bundles, called *epa*, are the Nupe unit of reckoning for calculating the yield, and also the standard 'load' (*kara*) used in the marketing of unthreshed grain.

The harvesting of late millet almost coincides with the beginning of the second ground-nut harvest. A fortnight or so later sorghum is brought in. Then follows in rapid succession, frequently overlapping, the picking of red pepper, cotton, and beans, while the ground-nut harvest is still going on. Lastly, grass on fallow farms is cut; when the last batches of ground-nuts are dug out, at the end of January, the agricultural cycle is completed.

Let us return for a moment to the harvesting of millet and sorghum. I have mentioned above that the dead stalks of millet and sorghum are left on the farms. Some of the stalks are retrieved after a fortnight, and used for mat-making (see p. 239). The rest, however, is left lying in the fields, till they are destroyed later in the 'burning of the farms'. The same applies to the stalks of maize, the cut-off vines of yam, and the leaves or stems of other plants. Thus the dead plants are allowed to rot on the fields, and fertilizing substance is washed into the soil by the rains which may fall in the weeks or months between the harvesting and the following dry season. This is the native system of 'green manuring' to which I have referred before. The Nupe are well aware of this effect, and say that these stalks and leaves *ẓe taki*, 'become dung'.

The time-factor in reaping and harvesting is less sharply defined than in sowing and planting. Harvesting activities are spread more irregularly over a longer space of time. Certain crops, e.g. yam, cotton, sweet potatoes, and rice, are harvested in stages as the individual plants or batches of plants mature. During the (first) yam harvest, for example, I saw the farmer open two mounds only to close them again, having discovered that the fruit inside was not yet ripe. Again, the picking of certain crops, e.g. ground-nuts, cotton, red pepper, and beans, is a very long-drawn-out operation. But it may be speeded up—and a quick harvest of the 'cash crops' (cotton and ground-nuts) may be an urgent necessity in times of financial stringency—if outside help can be enlisted. The picking of beans, which involves no such motives, is often left till the very last, and carried out leisurely by the family after all the other crops have been brought in.

The harvesting that falls in the middle of the agricultural season, on the other hand, must be carefully fitted into this schedule of farm-work.

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of training the new member of the profession joins one of the workshops in the quarter, while continuing to live in the house of his family. Large-scale co-operation is also of much less significance, since the furnaces are simple and easy to build, since no heavy anvils are used, and the forges mostly situated in the entrance hut of the house. The varied enterprises, and the spirit of 'individualism', render the advice or practical help of the guild-head less important. His organizing influence, however, is still an important factor. When, for example, the Bida brass-smiths first began to produce goods for Europeans, the guild-head took it upon himself to propagate this new profitable enterprise, and at the same time to assist the craftsmen in perfecting their technique. A District Officer who was a keen supporter of native arts and crafts had explained to him the kind of things that Europeans would buy—trays, ash-trays, finger-bowls, and suchlike. The guild-head himself led the way in the new production, and devised a system of guidance for his fellow workers. You can still see scratched into the mud wall of the guild-master's workshop circles, ovals, and squares of different size, which are the outlines of the objects the craftsmen were going to produce; they served as standard measures, and are indeed called by the Nupe *ema*, measure.

There are two ranks in the brass-smith guild, each presiding over one section: the guild-master, called *Muku*, and the 'Successor of the *Muku*', the *Shaba Muku*. They are the heads of the two large family groups which are said to have been the earliest representatives of the craft in Nupe and to which most of the brass-smith families trace (at least in theory) their descent. The two ranks are taken in turn by the two family groups. The present guild-master, a very old man, is living in the brass-smith group in the *Etsu* Usman quarter; the *Shaba Muku* is at the head of the more prosperous section in the Masaba quarter. With the growing prosperity of this guild section the authority and influence of the old guild-master have declined, and to-day the *Shaba Muku* is the more influential person. Even the most successful and most 'individualistic' young brass-smiths who have created their own special style treat the head of their guild section with the respect due to his position and experience.

Here, as in blacksmith work, the most important service which the guild-master renders his fellow workers is that of acting as an intermediary between the craftsmen and the court. Here, too, the king of Nupe places all his orders through the *Muku*, who then distributes them among the different workshops. The large orders of former days, for arms, sumptuous horse-trappings, ornaments of many kinds, have disappeared. The costly ornamented bowls, used formerly in every Nupe household of consequence as drinking-vessels or receptacles for food and kola-nuts, have been replaced by enamelled teapots of European or Japanese manufacture. But on a limited scale the court is still the most important customer of the Bida brass-smiths. To recall themselves to the king and to solicit his custom the brass-smiths make him an annual gift of products of their craft which is presented to him at the occasion of the Great *Sallah*. The present which the brass-smiths presented to the new *Etsu* at the first *Sallah* celebrated under his reign was, not unnaturally,

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thirteen looms, of which only ten were actually used, as the family numbered at that time only ten adult men. The individualistic nature of this work, however, in which no actual working together of several individuals is involved, is reflected in the restricted *efakó* arrangement, which comprises only a man and his young, as yet unmarried, sons. As soon as the sons are married, they work on their own, although they may continue to use the looms and tools which the family head had allotted to them when they were still working in the *efakó* group. The *efakó* head also supplies them with cotton thread for the start. When they are fairly launched on their new individual work they have to buy their own raw material from the proceeds of their work. Only the looms are still regarded as family property, and are kept in repair or replaced if necessary by the head of the household. In this case the individual worker pays the family head a regular 'rent' (called *lada*, lit. wages) of 2*d.* in every 3*s.* which he earns with his work—an arrangement which clearly takes into account the high cost of new looms. This arrangement, however, has been dropped; the young workers make themselves responsible for the cost of repairs or the purchase of their means of production, and the family head only receives occasional presents of food and clothing. In a number of cases I found the *efakó*-unit still further reduced, and even unmarried sons working on their own as soon as they reached the age when tax had to be paid for them. The difficulty which many family heads have to-day in providing tax money for a large family explains this disintegration of the labour-unit. The steadily declining demand for native woven cloth has been the main cause. In many houses looms stand unused, because weaving is no longer profitable, and young men, released from the *efakó*-unit, use their newly won leisure to turn at least temporarily to other, more lucrative, professions. In one weaver's family one of the three sons had given up weaving and become a messenger in the District Office; in another family, two of the six sons became servants in houses of Europeans, and only one of the two returned to his old profession after a number of years, having collected enough money for his bride-price and for a new start in his former profession.

The individual weaver is free to plan his work independently, and there are a number of different methods which he can adopt. The long narrow strips of cloth which the Nupe looms produce are always woven to a standard length of ten *kpere*, i.e. arm's lengths, the weaving of which takes five days. The most expensive, striped, cloth is then cut into five strips of two *kpere* each and sewn together, edge to edge, to form the complete *ede*, cloth, of the kind worn by women round the waist or as kerchiefs over the head. It is reckoned that one man can produce three to four lengths every month. The Nupe weavers work every day except Friday, but much time is taken up in getting the cloth sold. A weaver can entrust his goods to one of the brokers who have their shops on the Bida night market; but nowadays this means a long wait—even if one is lucky enough to get the cloth sold at all. Many younger men prefer therefore to do their own trading, and wander through the villages, often for three or five days, selling their cloth in village markets where there is less competition both in native-made and European goods. One piece of

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Cowrie-shells are a clumsy currency: you have to carry them about in bagfuls, and to count in thousands and tens of thousands. The numerical system of Nupe is fully equal to this task. Its elaboration and lucidity is not the least contribution to the efficiency of the exchange system of the country. Its scope is practically unlimited. A figure like 3,600,000 is expressed by this comparatively simple symbol: *gba kpotwani* (lit. two thousand times eighteen hundred, or, in more detail, two thousand times two hundred times nine). This facility in forming large numbers is due to the existence of a number of simple root words and multiples which are easy to handle. Omitting here the simpler figures 1–9, we find root words for 100, 200, and 2,000, multiples of 100 and 1,000 being formed by a simple multiplication of the root figures. For example, 400 is 200 . 2, i.e. *kpa gúba*, contracted to *kpoba*; 600 is 200 . 3, i.e. *kpa gúta*, contracted to *kpota*: 4,000 is 2,000 . 2, i.e. *gba gúba*, contracted to *gboba*; 6,000 is 2,000 . 3, i.e. *gba gúta*, contracted to *gbaotá*; 10,000 is 2,000 . 5, i.e. *gba gútsũ*, contracted to *gbotsũ*; and so on. A new unit is introduced as an alternative symbol for 20,000 cowries in the form of the *gura*, which is the name for the grass bags in which cowries were formerly packed. Thus 200,000 cowries (the traditional bride-price) make 10 *gura*; 400,000 20 *gura*, and so on.

The exchange rate between cowries and British money appears to have undergone some change. The original exchange rate, which I ascertained from the account of bride-price and tribute paid formerly, was 8*d*. for 2,000 cowries. Later the exchange value of cowries rose to 1*s*. for 2,000 cowries. This exchange rate is applied to-day when figures are quoted in cowries. Although cowrie-shells represented a currency in the strict sense of the word, they were used also for certain other purposes beside exchange, and had, above all, a certain value as ornaments. Gourds, bags, and musical instruments were formerly ornamented with cowries; but this practice has fallen into disuse.

To this elaborate system of units of exchange corresponds an almost as well-defined system of measures applied to commodities. We have spoken already of the *kpere*, the 'arm-length', a standard length used in measuring cloth; 10 *kpere* give, as we have seen, one full-length cloth. The measures used in selling agricultural produce are even more interesting, as quantities of these commodities do not lend themselves easily to simple forms of standardization. The unit for unthreshed grain is the bundle, *epa* (from *pa*, to tie up) or load, *kara*. It weighs very nearly 60 lb., but its size and weight vary a little according to the quality of the grain: of poorer grain there would be a larger quantity in the bundle, of better-class grain a proportionately smaller quantity, the main point being the equality in the value. Threshed grain is sold in large or small gourds, for which to-day tin bowls and basins are usually substituted. A large basinful of grain, *evo* (lit. gourd), contains twelve small bowls, *kpanu* (the latter taking a little over one pound). One bundle of unthreshed grain is reckoned to correspond to one *evo* of threshed grain. With maize five to six cobs are reckoned to give one small bowl of maize-flour. Rice is sold in large gourds (*evo*) or, more frequently, in small bowls, ten of which as a rule give one gourd. Beans are calculated in

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baskets (*kasa*); fruits and ground-nuts in *kasa* or *kara* (loads). The calculation is fairly precise, one 'load' of shea-nuts, for example, being reckoned to bring 2*s*., or one load of locust-beans 3*d*.

These examples suffice to illustrate the clear conception which the Nupe have of measures and marketable quantities. Combined with the universal use of money they result in a well-defined system of market prices. The calculation of market prices in Nupe corresponds closely to variations in supply and demand, above all, to seasonal fluctuations. We have already given instances. I will add here a few more which refer to the staple produce of the country.[1] In April and May 1936 one bundle of unthreshed sorghum was sold for 6*d*., in August and September for 9*d*. to 10*d*., and in certain places even for 1*s*. During the same time the price of bulrush-millet rose from 6*d*. to 1*s*. 6*d*. In April ten yams were sold for 6*d*.; at the beginning of June the price rose to 10*d*., and in July, shortly before the yam harvest, to 1*s*. 8*d*., to fall again in August to 6*d*. In the case of bulrush-millet and yam, the cultivation of which is restricted to certain districts, the fluctuations of price are markedly greater than in the case of the universal food-crop, sorghum. For rice, on the other hand, an expensive foodstuff for which there is only limited demand, and new supplies of which appear on the market three times a year, the price remained unchanged at 2*d*. for a small bowl.

These prices refer to village markets. Prices in Bida are always higher. When grain in the country sells for 6*d*. a bundle, the Bida price is 8*d*.; when the highest price in the country is 10*d*., it will reach in Bida 1*s*. and 2*s*. When yams are sold ten for 6*d*. in the country, the Bida price is ten for 9*d*., and so forth. Industrial products manufactured in Bida, on the other hand, are dearer in the districts, as the middlemen add a certain amount to the original price (between 1*d*. and 2*d*. in the shilling). Goods produced in the country which pass through the hands of the Bida trader on their way to Bida market or to markets abroad become markedly more expensive: thus Kutigi mats produced locally for 11*d*. are sold in Bida for 1*s*. or 1*s*. 2*d*., and abroad, for example in Lokoja, for 1*s*. 6*d*.

These regular variations and fluctuations in price must, to some extent at least, be based on a systematic common knowledge of the conditions which determine supply and demand in the country and which can thus sustain definite expectations of price developments at a given moment. Such a body of common knowledge indeed exists in Nupe. It is embodied in the universal experience that certain commodities are always plentiful in the dry season and get more and more scarce towards the close of the rains. It is also reflected in the generally accepted fact that prices are higher in the capital, which has to import a large proportion of its food-supplies, and which is also wealthier and possessed of a higher standard of living than the rest of the country. These considerations imply a further important fact viz. that distance between area of production and market, and the additional labour and loss of time involved in

[1] Certain fluctuations are determined by increased consumption during the festival season. Thus one sheep fetched 5*s*. in January and 10*s*. to 15*s*. in March, i.e. shortly before the Great Sallah, to fall again to 5*s*. during the rains (see p. 203, n. 1).